

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A touch panel apparatus comprising:
  - a liquid crystal display device including
    - a liquid crystal section,
    - an illuminating section disposed at a rear side of said liquid crystal section for illuminating said liquid crystal section, and
    - a frame section disposed on an outer periphery of said liquid crystal section;
  - a transparent resistive membrane type of touch panel disposed at a front side of said liquid crystal display device; and
  - a spacer member disposed between said frame section of said liquid crystal display device and a periphery of said touch panel for defining a clearance between said liquid crystal section of said liquid crystal display device and said touch panel;

wherein said spacer member covers an area from a front surface of said frame section of said liquid crystal display device to a periphery of a front surface of said liquid crystal section while maintaining said clearance between said liquid crystal section and said ~~liquid crystal display device~~ touch panel.
2. (Original) The touch panel apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein a portion of said spacer member that covers said liquid crystal section is provided in a rear surface with a recess for defining a clearance between said spacer member and said liquid crystal section.
3. (Original) The touch panel apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein a portion of said spacer member that covers said liquid crystal section is provided in a front surface with a recess for defining a clearance between said spacer member and said touch panel.

4. (Original) The touch panel apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said spacer member is formed to expose only a display area on a front surface of said liquid crystal section and to cover a periphery of said front surface.

5. (Original) The touch panel apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein a lower positioning wall projects from a rear surface of said spacer member to engage an outer peripheral side surface of said frame section of said liquid crystal display device, thereby positioning said frame section with respect to the rear surface of said spacer member.

6. (Original) The touch panel apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein an upper positioning wall projects from said front surface of said spacer member to engage an outer peripheral side surface of said touch panel, thereby positioning said touch panel with respect to the front surface of said spacer member.

7. (New) The touch panel apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said spacer member is spaced away from the liquid crystal section.

8. (New) The touch panel apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein a distal end of the rear surface of said spacer member is concaved.

9. (New) The touch panel apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein a distal end of the front surface of said spacer member is tapered.